

# Sustainability and Business 101

Infusing Sustainability into an  
Introduction to Business class at Olympic College

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# Characteristics of Business101

- Meets social science general education requirements, program prerequisites
- A wide variety of students take the class – has to be relevant for future business leaders, as well as employees and consumers
- Broad overview of business - covers a lot of subject matter quickly
- Course introduces students to different stakeholder perspectives for assessing business decisions
- Textbook\* includes “Seeking Sustainability” examples
- Honest - business activities have caused environmental and social justice issues
- Hopeful - business is a source of innovations and solutions

\*Understanding Business, 11ed, Nickels, McHugh, & McHugh, McGraw Hill Education

# Introducing Sustainability into Business 101

- **In-class discussions**

- Discuss different stakeholder perspectives and expectations about a business
- Business – A source of problems, a source of hope
  - Develop list of ways business has contributed to the world's problems
  - Develop list of ways business can solve the world's problems

- **Short projects**

- Analyze the supply chain for a product (or one part of a product) from raw material to end of life disposal.
  - Identify each intermediary in the supply chain.
  - Identify any social justice or environmental issues that may be impacted by different functions in the supply chain.

# Stakeholder Perspectives and Expectations

- Stockholders – profitable, growth, no scandals
- Customers – quality and safe products, fair price
- Employees – fair wages, safe and secure working conditions
- Vendors – healthy business growth, on-time payments
- Community members – positive contribution to community well-being
- Politicians – successful business, local job growth
- Government – pays taxes, compliant with the law

## Business – A source of problems, a source of hope

### **Business has contributed to the world's problems**

- Business processes lead to air, water, ground pollution
- Resource abuse, destruction of the environment, deforestation
- Garbage from packaging, throw-away goods, e-waste
- Overconsumption
- Climate change – greenhouse gas emissions
- Social issues – create haves and have-nots, state of dissatisfaction, false promises, job loss through technology
- Unethical practices, community and investor rip-offs

## Business – A source of problems, a source of hope

### **Business can help to solve the world's problems**

- Research and develop eco-friendly resources, products, packaging
- Restore natural resources that have been destroyed
- Recycle and reuse waste
- Pay fair wages
- Employers can invest in employees with opportunities and education to develop their career
- Use technology to solve problems - Hydro-energy, windmills
- Communicate with honesty and transparency
- Be more responsible for long-term community impacts – Corporate Social Responsibility

# Analyze product supply chain - from raw material to end of life disposal

## **Student discoveries and commitments to change**

- Cosmetology student who discovered toxic ingredients in beauty products and the results of animal testing vowed to research all beauty products she would use in the future
- Computer student who learned about living conditions in communities where computers are dumped researched companies with product return systems, such as Hewlett-Packard
- Group of students who watched video about Great Pacific Garbage Patch committed to stop drinking water from plastic bottles